

2014

Targeted Initiative for Older Workers

# BEST PRACTICES COMPENDIUM



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## Preface

Following up on a commitment made among federal and provincial/territorial partners (F-P/T) at the 2012 Annual TIOW Workshop, this “Best Practices Compendium” was compiled to illustrate examples of best practices in TIOW programming from across Canada.

This compendium was prepared by the TIOW unit at Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) with input from all provinces and territories.

Appreciation is extended to all provincial and territorial partners for the detailed case studies, vignettes, quotes, and photos used in the development of this product. Further recognition also goes to representatives from British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Québec for providing feedback at earlier stages of this product’s development.

## Purpose of this Compendium

Since the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) was first announced in 2006, provinces and territories (P/Ts) have adopted a variety of innovative and successful models for TIOW-based programming within their communities.

Accordingly, the purpose of this compendium is to serve as a useful tool to:

- ❖ Showcase a sampling of the many successful and innovative TIOW projects and/or practices implemented across jurisdictions, and to capture and disseminate lessons learned;
- ❖ Assist P/Ts and/or project sponsors in replicating TIOW models for other populations and/or other labour market programs for older workers; and
- ❖ Provide additional sources of program knowledge to complement information generated through other avenues (i.e. evaluation studies, workshop presentations, and vignettes shared by P/Ts).

It is acknowledged that best practices in TIOW programming may be categorized in numerous ways and that each jurisdiction can have multiple examples of promising practices. For the purposes of this compendium, each project and/or practice featured as a “Best Practice” satisfied one or more of the following criteria:

- ❖ Showcased unique and/or innovative elements;
- ❖ Featured positive and/or impressive results; and/or
- ❖ Demonstrated the potential for replication in other jurisdictions or among other client groups.

## Older Workers and the Labour Market Context

In 2013, almost one in five Canadians in the labour market (employed and unemployed) were aged 55 and older. This is an increase from 2003 when one in eight Canadians in the labour market were aged 55 and older. By 2021, it is expected that almost a quarter of Canadians will be older workers within this age range.

Given that population aging is forecasted to slow Canada's labour force growth significantly over the coming decades, the continued participation of older workers in the labour market will be critical to Canada's economic growth and future prosperity in the years ahead.

Indeed, evidence from a variety of sources indicates that many older workers are looking to work longer for financial and/or personal reasons. Thus, older workers are, and will continue to be, an increasingly important segment of the labour force -- representing a large source of experienced workers for employers, especially for those reporting skilled labour shortages in certain sectors and occupations.

Nevertheless, while older workers perform relatively well in the labour market overall, there is continued evidence that those who experience job loss fare significantly worse in the labour market than workers in other age groups. In 2013, 16.6% of unemployed older adults aged 55-64, were unemployed for 52 weeks or longer compared to 14.2% of prime age workers aged 25-54.

Unemployed older workers can also face particular challenges reintegrating into the labour market. Some of these challenges may include: lack of transferable skills, over-representation in declining industries and/or in single industry communities,<sup>1</sup> lower levels of mobility, education, and literacy, and/or employer bias.

These barriers are even further exacerbated when older workers are living in smaller, more remote communities with limited opportunities and limited economic infrastructure to support training and employment transitions.

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<sup>1</sup> One challenge older workers face over and above prime age workers is that they are disproportionately employed in traditional industries, particularly manufacturing sub-industries, and industries such as fishing, hunting & trapping, agriculture, and forestry that have been facing a decline of employment since the early 1990s.

## TIOW Overview

Recognizing that older workers have valuable skills and experience to contribute to the labour market and the future prosperity of the country, the Government of Canada announced the creation of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) in 2006.

TIOW is a successful, federal-provincial/territorial (F-P/T) cost-shared initiative designed to assist unemployed older workers living in small, vulnerable communities of 250,000 people and less with their reintegration into the workforce. In situations where there is little likelihood of immediate employment opportunities, TIOW activities are aimed at increasing the employability of older workers and ensuring that they remain active and productive labour market participants while their communities undergo adjustment.

Initially launched as a temporary initiative, TIOW was subsequently extended three times to-date -- in Budgets 2008, 2011, and 2014 respectively. The most recent program extension in Budget 2014 is the third renewal of this successful initiative and represents an overall federal investment of \$75M over the three-year renewal period (\$25M/year in 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17).

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*“Hopefully this program will be available to many in the same need as I was. So wonderful our government recognizes our needs to be able to return with pride to the changed labor force.”*

– BC TIOW Participant

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## TIOW Model

The TIOW model was developed based on best practices and lessons learned from previous older worker programs.

The innovative approach of the model has contributed to TIOW's success in a number of ways:

**Group-based/peer support model is a key feature of all programming.** TIOW's group-based project model places significant emphasis on peer mentoring and support. As a significant portion of TIOW project activities take place in a classroom environment or other type of collective setting, project participants are encouraged to learn from and support one another during the training. Given that many older workers have not been engaged in formal learning for considerable periods of time, this aspect of TIOW interventions has frequently been cited by both participants and training providers as having a particularly positive impact on participant learning, confidence, and motivation.<sup>2</sup>

**Projects are customized for the particular needs of participants and linked to local economic development plans, initiatives, and assessment criteria.** As provinces and territories are responsible for targeting specific communities for interventions as well as for designing and delivering projects (normally via community-based organizations),<sup>3</sup> the program's flexibility enables jurisdictions to adapt the TIOW model to meet participant needs and to respond to evolving labour market opportunities and challenges at the local level.

**Stakeholders draw upon the collective expertise and capacity of the various levels of government and the local organizations delivering TIOW training.** TIOW projects are often embedded in regional economic development strategies and complement existing employment programming and adjustment initiatives in the region.

**TIOW differs from other programs in terms of its funding model, eligibility criteria, and core activities.** TIOW is the only dedicated federal program that targets unemployed older workers living in smaller, vulnerable communities. It is based on a federal-provincial/territorial (F-P/T) cost-shared partnership model (please see further details on next page).

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<sup>2</sup>Due to the success of the 'TIOW' model, the option to incorporate a group-based training component into other types of labour market programming has been gaining momentum, including in the Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs).

<sup>3</sup>Provinces and territories can have differing approaches to how they design and deliver TIOW projects. For an overview of various approaches by jurisdiction, please see Appendix A.



## Funding

Under TIOW's cost-shared approach, the federal government funds up to 70% of eligible project costs, and each province or territory funds a minimum of 30% of eligible project costs.

## Eligibility

All TIOW projects are subject to eligibility criteria both at the community level and at the level of the individual participant.

### *Participant Eligibility*

In order to take part in a TIOW project, participants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- ❖ Be an unemployed older worker (generally aged 55 to 64). Workers aged 50 to 54 or over age 64 may also participate, but not at the exclusion of the main targeted age group.
- ❖ Reside in an eligible community.

### *Community Eligibility*

In order for cities and towns to be considered eligible for TIOW, they must meet the following criteria:

- ❖ Have a population of 250,000 or less; and,
- ❖ Be experiencing high unemployment and/or significant downsizing or closures(s).

Please Note: As of March 31, 2014 community eligibility for TIOW was broadened to also include the following two criteria. However, these new community eligibility criteria were not in place when the projects described in the document were implemented:

- ❖ Skills mismatches; and/or
- ❖ Unfulfilled employer demand.

## Activities

All TIOW projects must provide a minimum of 25 hours of programming per week and must fulfill the following requirements:

- ❖ Ensure the provision of employment assistance activities (e.g., résumé writing, counseling, interview techniques, job search techniques, etc.) & include at least two employability improvement activities such as:
  - **Participant Assessment:** Prior learning assessment, portfolio development, grade 12 equivalency, vocational and interest assessment.
  - **Mentoring:** Mentoring relationships to support older workers as they transition to employment.
  - **Specific Occupational Skills Training:** Targeted to current or anticipated labour market demands, classroom skills training (employers, short certifications), on-the-job employer-based training.
  - **Preparation for Self-Employment:** Support business plan development, business shadowing or business mentorship.
  - **Basic Skills Upgrading:** Computer use, reading, writing, numeracy, and oral communication.
  - **Direct Marketing to Employers:** Direct marketing and matching to employers, monitored work placement with subsidy to employer.
  - **Employer-based Work Experience:** Subsidized work placements with local employers to enable participants to gain skills/experience in new fields.
  - **Community-based Work Experience:** Job creation activities aimed at community benefits that include support to economic development plans (i.e. limited to communities with fewer job prospects).
  - **Post Project Follow-up:** Social events, telephone contact, open door counseling.

\*Please Note: TIOW participants also receive income support while participating on a project (such as allowances, wages, or wage subsidies) as applicable under provincial or territorial legislation.

## Results

Overall evidence from multiple sources indicates that TIOW has been effective at helping displaced older workers to re-integrate into the workforce through group-based training and flexible programming that is designed for the needs of older workers in the small, vulnerable communities in which it is delivered.

### Program Data

Between the launch of the initiative in 2007 and April 2014, a total of 417 TIOW projects were implemented by provinces and territories (270 of which were also extended) to support over 32,230 unemployed older workers in small, vulnerable communities across Canada (Source: April 2014 Program Administrative Data, ESDC).

### Participant Profiles

Over the past seven years, program administrative data has highlighted trends in the characteristics of TIOW participants across the country.<sup>4</sup> For instance, during the period from 2007 to 2013, the largest share of participants (approx. 42%) were between the ages of 55-59 years, and just slightly over half (approx. 55%) of all participants were women.

Considerable variation was noted in the levels of education attained among participants, ranging from below high school completion to achievement of advanced degrees; it is notable that nearly one-third (approx. 30%) of TIOW participants did not complete high school.

In terms of prior earnings in the labour market, the largest share of TIOW participants (approx. 43%) reported earning \$25,000 or less during the last year of their previous job, and approximately 50% of participants reported having received Employment Insurance (E.I.) benefits at some point in the past five years.

While the majority of TIOW projects to-date have been concentrated in communities affected by layoffs from traditional sectors (forestry, mining, fishing, textiles), it is noted that TIOW participants were often employed in a broad range of sectors prior to program participation as a result of spin-offs from plant closures and/or industry downsizing.

Following project participation, TIOW participants found employment in diverse facets of the labour force including transportation, home care, tourism, arts and culture, and service sector.

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<sup>4</sup> Program administrative data does not include Ontario and Quebec as these two provinces supply program information to ESDC through alternate mechanisms.

## Evaluations

All phases of TIOW evaluations to-date have found similarly positive indications of success regarding the program's achievement of its core objectives, with the Formative Evaluation (2010) and the Summative Evaluation (2014), noting that "labour market outcomes for participants were largely positive".

Highlights and key considerations of client findings from the various evaluation phases are as follows:

- ❖ 75% found employment in their local area during or after their participation;
- ❖ At least 70% felt more employable as a result of their participation;
- ❖ More than 80% indicated that they were satisfied with the training they received;
- ❖ 75% of those who worked after the program experienced a change in their work setting (50% changed sectors, 25% changed employers);
- ❖ 44% were employed eight months after program participation. This number remained constant at 41% after 18 months; and,
- ❖ Many participants were successfully matched with local employers – a majority of whom were retained after their work placement.

For further information on evaluation results to-date, please see the following links:

*Formative Evaluation of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers - June 2010:*  
[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/publications/evaluations/skills\\_and\\_employment/2010/june.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/publications/evaluations/skills_and_employment/2010/june.shtml)

*Summative Evaluation of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers - July 2014:*  
<http://www12.hrsdc.gc.ca/servlet/sgpp-pmps-pub?lang=eng&curjsp=p.5bd.2t.1.3ls@-eng.jsp&curactn=dwnld&pid=8638&did=1>.

## International Recognition

The program has been featured in several international publications including:

- "G20 Country Policy Briefs:" <http://www.oecd.org/els/48723921.pdf> and;
- Chapter 22 of OECD Report "Demographic Change and Local Development: Shrinkage, Regeneration, and Social Dynamics" [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/demographic-change-and-local-development\\_9789264180468-en#page231](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/demographic-change-and-local-development_9789264180468-en#page231)

## Lessons Learned on Program Delivery

### Annual TIOW Workshops

ESDC hosts annual F-P/T Workshops on TIOW. Over the years, these Workshops have provided many valuable insights for Federal and Provincial/Territorial partners, particularly pertaining to the design of TIOW projects, the selection of sponsors, and the identification of participant needs.

### *On TIOW Projects...*

The projects require strong facilitators who have a keen ability to ensure project activities remain flexible, adaptable, and responsive to diverse participant needs.

### *On TIOW Project Sponsors...*

The project sponsors must ensure that the unique challenges/opportunities facing mature workers, along with any particular older worker sensitivities, are taken into consideration in curriculum design.

The project sponsors should also work proactively to develop partnerships and collaboration opportunities with employers, community organizations, and/or educational institutions.

### *On TIOW Participants...*

Participants identify computer training, skills assessments, portfolio development, job search techniques, interview preparation activities, and mentorship opportunities among their top training needs. They also indicate that opportunities to engage with guest speakers (i.e. local employers and/or past project participants) during their training can facilitate networking opportunities and/or enhance motivation.

Participants highly value the peer support offered by TIOW's group-based training model.

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*"This program has been life altering for me."*

- Kimberley, Former TIOW Participant

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## Best Practices: Highlights by Jurisdiction

Using a series of illustrative examples from each jurisdiction, this Compendium showcases a series of successful TIOW projects and/or practices from across the country. The goal of this discussion is not simply to report on results. Rather, these illustrations are provided to encourage collaborative dialogue about new project ideas or potential enhancements to TIOW programming.

As noted earlier, “Best Practices” may be categorized in a number of ways, and each jurisdiction can have multiple examples of innovative projects and/or practices. For ease of reference, this Compendium provides a sampling of TIOW projects and/or practices from across Canada. Each of the examples provided have been organized into distinct categories or themes to provide insights into what provinces and territories have done in the following three areas:

- ❖ Innovative Project Design and Administration;
- ❖ Working with Employers; and
- ❖ Building on Local Strengths.

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*“The training instilled new-found confidence in me as well as specific skills, such as interviewing and networking skills, that helped me find a good job.”*

– NB TIOW Participant

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## Innovative Project Design and Administration

Projects and/or practices included under the category “Innovative Project Design and Administration” incorporated innovative or unique design component(s) into TIOW programming in order to address a specific challenge or consideration.

Among the many innovative TIOW project designs across Canada, two examples of best practices emerged in Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island which may be particularly promising for replicating or adapting elsewhere in the country. The example from Saskatchewan features a project which leveraged a collaborative partnership with a local First Nations band to provide specific supports to its First Nations participants. The example from Prince Edward Island highlights an online social platform the province developed for program participants and stakeholders as a mechanism to foster ongoing communication and to keep participants up-to-date on job opportunities and community supports available.

Additionally, three other examples of best practices in innovative project design and administration are highlighted in British Columbia, Ontario, and New Brunswick respectively. The success of all of these TIOW projects was influenced in some manner by the preparatory work done at the pre-implementation stage to set up and/or administer projects.

The British Columbia example illustrates the rigorous intake process the province implemented to balance the high demand for training with available resources, while providing other types of support to clients not selected for TIOW. In Ontario, two local project sponsors in Windsor collaborated to reduce overlap and target specific skills. Finally, in the New Brunswick example, a project sponsor maximized the reach of available resources by leveraging unused wage subsidy funds offered to employers to run a one-week intensive course for a new round of participants.

**Each of these examples is showcased on the following pages.**

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*“The group experience was empowering and energizing.  
My confidence and determination has increased 100%.”*

- Diane, Age 57, Former TIOW Participant

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## Saskatchewan: “Put Your Wisdom to Work”

La Ronge is a community of more than 2,700 people in Central Saskatchewan. It is surrounded by several First Nations reserves, and is considered to be the Northern hub for Provincial government activities. The area has an unemployment rate of 8.2% despite many job vacancies posted in the community.

The *Put Your Wisdom to Work* project was operated by the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM), an umbrella group in the province that covers seniors’ issues. SSM operated the project in support of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and targeted First Nations participants. The 12 week project offered components that were similar to other projects across the country, such as employment assistance activities, a 2-week job shadowing placement, and skills training with an aim of increasing the number of “employment ready” individuals to fill local labor market needs.



Along with other skills, participants gained experience/confidence in computer usage (e-mail, software, internet, and online job search/resume writing techniques). Of the 15 participants, 9 found employment immediately following the project; several other participants were expected to secure employment shortly after. At the six month follow-up, 12 of the 15 participants had found employment.

SSM was able to benefit from the active partnership of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, and leveraged additional supports from the partnership, such as transportation assistance and laptop computers which enabled the project

to emphasize development of computer skills. Computer usage was incorporated within daily project activities, reinforcing the value of technology as a tool to assist participants with both personal and professional activities.

**Best Practice:** By targeting a particular sub-segment of their older worker clientele (in this case, a significant First Nations population in the area), SSM identified an opportunity to leverage additional resources from the Band to the benefit of both partners and the participants. Providing supports such as transportation assistance helped reduce a significant barrier to participation in TIOW programming. The laptops allowed SSM to emphasize the importance of computers as a tool for personal and professional skill-building, and the Band’s investment saw rapid returns in the form of the immediate employment of many participating members.



## Prince Edward Island: Passport to Employment

The demographics of Prince Edward Island's population and labour force are evolving. An aging workforce has been identified as one of the province's major challenges for future economic growth. Primary industries are responsible for approximately 18 percent of the employment in rural areas and are now struggling to remain competitive. Accordingly, employment in these industries has decreased and many of those affected are older workers with limited formal education. To address these challenges, Prince Edward Island has utilized TIOW funding to implement a unique project model called *Passport to Employment* which has various client intakes throughout each year in the province's three counties and assists older workers in acquiring general, entrepreneurial or sector-based skills.

*Passport* incorporated two unique elements into its TIOW model. The first is an online self-assessment strategy where the learning needs of individual participants are measured in order to generate benchmark and summative self-assessment data regarding skill levels in key areas. The tool classifies participant skill levels from "functional" to "mastery" and helps to define transferable skills that participants already possess while identifying other skills they could develop or enhance. Participants can monitor their progress from one skill level to the next.

The second tool is an interactive social media network which all TIOW participants are encouraged to join. *NING* is a real-time social media platform (similar to Facebook) which allows current participants, past participants and program/provincial coordinators to share links, news, contact information, quotes, videos and most importantly, allows the participants to stay in touch during and after the training ends. *NING* can also be used as a mentoring tool and for other useful engagement activities that could lead to potential jobs.



Best Practice: *Passport* has innovatively taken advantage of electronic and social media tools to enhance the employability of participants. By teaching participants how to identify and harness the transferable skills they already possess, the online assessment tool helps

participants expand their job search to sectors or occupations they may not have previously considered, as they may have believed they lacked the skills required for those jobs. Participants may also experience a confidence boost by tracking their progress in gaining new skills.

Additionally, the adoption of the NING social media platform provides a convenient mechanism and collaborative space for current and former TIOW clients to communicate and actively support each other with news, tips, and leads on potential job opportunities long after TIOW programming has ended. Services such as *NING* are private, for-profit social media sites that offer a secure platform for these activities while providing privacy to the participants.

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*"It is difficult as an older worker to enter the workforce in a worthwhile position. The support that these programs offer, along with the encouragement, gives one the feeling that they do have something to offer still."*

-Louise, Age 56, Former TIOW Participant

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## British Columbia: “Vintage Advantage”

Creative Employment Access Society (CEAS), or “The Jobshop” as it is known locally, is an incorporated non-profit society providing employment transition programs and services in Courtney and the Comox Valley. The population of the area is approximately 63,000 with ongoing high unemployment. The Comox Valley has a long history as a resource-based economy. However, the forestry sector experienced a decline in production and several mill closures have occurred over the past ten years. Many older workers have been displaced in the area and have become discouraged as they have been unable to make the transition to alternative employment. Given that the Courtney/Comox area is a highly desirable retirement area, many retirees have moved to the area only to find that their retirement income is not sufficient to support their needs and many face challenges trying to enter an unfamiliar labour market.

Displacement and relocation issues have created significant demand for the limited number of seats in CEAS’s Vintage Advantage program. The program offers 10 spaces per each 11-week session, and program recruitment efforts involve a multi-prong advertising and recruitment campaign which is highly effective and can often result in more than 45 applications being received for each session. Specifically, TIOW projects are frequently advertised through various local media outlets, community agencies, job fairs, and direct marketing to employment service centres. In some cases, clients may also self-refer for TIOW consideration directly via project sponsors.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining smaller group sizes to ensure the program can meet the individual and collective needs of project participants, ‘Vintage Advantage’ designed an intake process which thoroughly assessed potential participants for TIOW suitability prior to entry into the program. It also offered employment supports (and/or referrals to other programs, if applicable) to every applicant regardless of whether or not they are accepted into the TIOW project.



Facilitators deliver TIOW session in British Columbia

In step one of the recruitment and selection process, prospective TIOW candidates submit a detailed application and participate in an informational interview which allows project coordinators to assess basic eligibility criteria and answer questions from applicants. Step two requires applicants to participate in a group information session which includes a group exercise. Potential participants are observed during this group process, provided with further information on the program, and have an opportunity to hear past participants speak about

their experiences in the program. During step three, applicants participate in an individual interview with the Coordinator and Job Coach to discuss specific employment goals and supports they feel they need to return to work.

This three-phase approach allows both project staff and applicants to determine if the TIOW program offers the type of supports the candidate needs. When this is deemed not to be the case, CEAS provides detailed feedback to applicants and refers applicants to other community or employment services relevant to their job search efforts. CEAS has found that many applicants are often not aware of the range of employment supports available to them and are grateful for a referral to a program that better meets their particular needs if TIOW is deemed not to be the right fit.



**Best Practice:** Over the years, TIOW applicants have informed CEAS staff that one of the most difficult aspects of looking for work can be the lack of response or feedback often received from employers regarding their applications. The CEAS application process ensures all applicants receive individualized assessments, referrals, and follow-ups that support their needs whether or not their TIOW application is successful.

By providing detailed assessment information and support during the intake process, the applicants' needs, expectations, and special considerations (if applicable) are identified and taken into account well before training commencement. This helps to ensure clients are fully aware of TIOW objectives, expectations, and requirements from the onset. The thorough recruitment and assessment process adopted in British Columbia ultimately helps to ensure that older workers selected for TIOW participation are truly engaged and committed to the program which thereby increases their chances for success. This model also demonstrates recognition of (and responsiveness to) the varied needs TIOW applicants may present by facilitating pathways to other types of employment or community supports, as needed.

Additionally, the multi-prong advertising and recruitment approach adopted for TIOW in this example offers advantages from both a program marketing and participant recruitment perspective. Specifically, advertisement campaigns involving newspapers, radio, websites, and community organizations/agencies can serve to increase awareness of TIOW to a broader audience of potential participants and prospective employers. The provision of multiple recruitment pathways for TIOW participation has also been shown to be highly effective in referring numerous eligible individuals to the program by third parties and in allowing individuals who may not be involved with local employment agencies to self-refer to the program, thereby increasing access to training opportunities.

## Ontario: Enhancing Employment for Older Workers

The city of Windsor was heavily impacted by the recent recession. Numerous plant closures and downsizings (i.e. General Motors, Ford and feeder plants) affected many older workers, particularly those who worked for a single company for their entire careers. Indeed, many of these older workers are several years away from being able to collect partial or full workplace pensions or the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). Many also need assistance to find employment in a challenging labour market.

The Unemployed Help Centre of Windsor's *Enhancing Employment* program (herein referred to as the "Centre") provides training that specifically targets three distinct employment streams: 1) Customer Service; 2) Security; or 3) Bookkeeping. In developing these training regimes, the Centre consulted a range of employers and job developers to identify skills requirements for specific industries in order to ensure curriculum design was tailored to meet these needs.

*John, 60, worked in the auto industry for 37 years before the plant closed in Windsor. His union directed him to the Unemployed Help Centre and the older workers program. He went through the program and landed a job in security. He learned several skills, including how to write a resume. "I hadn't done that in years," he said. The program was a success for John. "The day I got my security license the Unemployed Help Centre called me and told me they had a job for me," he said. John said he's happy in his new role.*

Prospective participants attended an information workshop at the Centre and sat down with an employment counsellor to discuss the program and select a training stream that best suits their needs. At any point in the application process, if a participant determines that none of these streams suits their needs, he or she is referred to another project sponsored by the City of Windsor for more general assistance. Both project sponsors in Windsor have developed separate training programs and approaches, and work with one another to ensure duplication is avoided.

**Best Practice:** Based on consultations with employers, the Centre adopted a streaming approach to training which focused on three specific careers. One of the benefits to this approach is that the curriculum could be more targeted and intensive, focusing largely on the specific skills needed to work in these three core fields that present a range of potential employment opportunities.

Additionally, recognizing that other career options may be more suited to (and/or preferred by) potential participants, the Centre developed connections with another project sponsor in the area in order to reduce overlap in programming and to ensure that potential participants have access to alternate training options. By establishing an application process that is thorough enough to assess potential participants' interests, needs and/or suitability to various training streams and which provides a range of targeted, sector-specific training options to help respond to local employer needs, the partnership approach adopted by project sponsors in this Ontario example succeeded in offering participants a more diverse range of training options than might have been possible through a single project sponsor.

## **New Brunswick: Experience is Key – La clé: l'expérience**

The Restigouche East-Centre region of New Brunswick consistently has among the highest unemployment rates in the province. For example, in March 2011, the unemployment rate in northeastern New Brunswick was 16.4%, compared to the province-wide average of 9.8%.

The region's economy has traditionally been dependent on the forestry sector and has experienced particular difficulties following the closures of pulp and paper mills. The labour market situation in the area has been further exacerbated by an outflow of significant portions of the population, particularly young and skilled workers, toward urban centres. As a result, many businesses in the area are experiencing recruitment challenges, a situation that *Experience* hoped to take advantage of by preparing older workers to pursue these opportunities.

The original project proposal submitted by the Restigouche Community Business Development Corporation included two separate TIOW sessions (one in French, one in English) consisting of four weeks of group-based training, including job search and employment assistance activities (e.g. active job search club, TOWES assessments, First Aid/CPR, computer training, entrepreneurship) and a 14-week work experience component, which included an offer of a wage subsidy to eligible employers.



Unexpectedly, several employers did not elect to use the wage subsidy option when hiring TIOW participants. This resulted in some untapped program dollars. The province and project sponsor seized the opportunity presented by this unforeseen funding surplus to maximize the program's reach by quickly mobilizing to implement a bilingual, one-week, group-based Job Search Club and Employability Improvement session for a new round of participants. Given the short duration, the course content was condensed to activities such as computer skills, resume and cover letter writing, job search techniques, interview skills, and identifying potential employment opportunities. Nine new participants benefited from this experience.

**Best Practice:** The Restigouche Community Business Development Corporation seized an opportunity to maximize the reach of available program funding by quickly organizing an impromptu mini-training session for a new group of older workers. This resulted in more unemployed older workers receiving assistance under TIOW than originally forecasted. The success of the mini-intake has also become part of a wider conversation within the province of New Brunswick about the future of TIOW programming and effective programming options.

## Working with Employers

An important role played by many TIOW project sponsors is facilitating linkages with local employers and reinforcing the benefits and advantages of hiring older workers as part of a comprehensive, adaptable, responsible human resource (HR) strategy. For project sponsors, this often involves taking advantage of local roots in the community, building and maintaining networks, and/or actively leveraging publicity—participating in media campaigns to promote TIOW awareness among employers and in the community-at-large.

Accordingly, many examples of best practices in “Working with Employers” are evident in TIOW programming across the country. Nevertheless, five specific examples of promising practices are featured herein to illustrate the manner in which Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Yukon, Quebec, and Alberta optimized employer connections and bolstered employer awareness of TIOW and the positive impacts of hiring TIOW participants.

In the Manitoba project showcased, special attention was paid to ensuring potential employers and TIOW participants were appropriately matched (i.e. “right fit” for one another) to ensure successful results and mutual benefit for both parties. The Nova Scotia project encouraged TIOW participants to actively pursue work placements with local employers and engaged employers in a variety of ways to motivate program participants and to encourage other employers to hire TIOW participants. The example included by Yukon illustrates how the project sponsor tapped into its considerable roots in the communities to engage employers as an integral part of the programming.

Additionally, the two examples featured from Quebec and Alberta demonstrate how TIOW projects can leverage collaborative relationships with employers to address demands and opportunities in emerging, evolving, or established sectors though targeted and tailored curriculum design.

In the Quebec example, the project sponsor developed a dedicated training program for TIOW clients directly within a wood-working shop to help participants develop the hands-on, tangible experience sought after by local wood product-related businesses. Finally, in the Alberta example, TIOW clients were actively targeted to employers in the tourism and recreation sector, improving awareness among local employers of the valuable role older workers can play in helping them to address their challenges in recruitment and retention.

**Each of these examples is showcased on the following pages.**

## Manitoba: Swan Valley Employment and Training Project (SVETP)

*SVETP* serves the Swan Valley Area, which includes both Swan River and the Rural Municipality of Swan River, located near the border with Saskatchewan. The combined population of the area is approximately 6,450 residents. The Swan Valley Area was impacted by a recent downturn in the local Forestry sector, which cascaded down to the local business community, resulting in reduced employment opportunities. The Agriculture sector also experienced difficulties due to the impact of flooding, unfavourable weather conditions and excess moisture in the area.



Federal TIOW representative meets with provincial counterparts in Manitoba

The Town of Swan River sponsored a TIOW project not only as a means to help older workers who had been impacted by the economic difficulties in the area, but also as a means to assist local employers in achieving their staffing needs. Project staff liaised with local employers and conducted labour market consultations to assess employer needs while apprising them of *SVETP* and the benefits of hiring older workers. This included working with employers to identify gaps in the skill sets of prospective employees and identifying potential employment opportunities that TIOW clients might fill in the local area.

After completing an initial needs assessment/inventory, a key component of *SVETP*'s activities was to maintain ongoing engagement with employers to ensure there was a match between the participants' evolving skill sets and employers' needs. Ongoing engagement allowed the project staff to ensure alignment of TIOW activities with local labour market needs and opportunities. Participants were also guided and supported in their job search efforts until they found employment.

**Best Practice:** A key factor contributing to *SVETP*'s success was the project staff's commitment to continuous engagement and ongoing networking in order to establish and maintain links with local employers and to help ensure TIOW participants acquired the skills needed for local jobs. Maintaining active networks also allowed *SVETP* to continue providing ongoing support to participants with their job search activities after they had completed TIOW and to keep participants informed regarding potential employment leads identified through the network.



## Nova Scotia: PeopleWorx - Putting Experience to Work (PETW) Program

Berwick is a small town located in the eastern portion of the Annapolis Valley. In recent years, several major employers in the area shut down and activities in traditional and primary industries diminished, causing unemployment to increase from 8.8% to 11.5%. Fortunately, opportunities for employment exist in the local small business sector and with other major regional employers (including Michelin, CFB Greenwood), and in local social, educational and health institutions.

Project coordinators engaged local employers to “open the door to the workplace” by raising the profile of the TIOW program and the skills offered by project participants. Sponsors met with local employers to facilitate networking opportunities, secure job placement opportunities for TIOW participants, and negotiate wage subsidies. Sponsors also attended local events, met employers one-on-one, and visited municipal offices to promote older workers and discuss potential opportunities. One additional activity the project coordinators engaged in was regularly scanning the Job Bank and arranging meetings with hiring employers for the purpose of promoting older workers as potential employees.

Additionally, coordinators engaged with employers who had benefited from TIOW in the past and obtained letters of support for the quality of work offered by TIOW participants. Some employers who previously hired TIOW participants for job placements volunteered to speak at the closing ceremony regarding their success in hiring TIOW participants, regarding the positive attributes possessed by TIOW clients, and regarding how TIOW clients have proven to be an asset to their businesses.

While the project coordinators provided considerable assistance in securing work placements and jobs for TIOW participants, the participants themselves were encouraged to take an active role in securing their own placements by actively promoting their work placement to employers with whom they were interested in working.

*Carol worked for many years as a fishery worker but felt, given her age, that the time had come for a change in employment. Carol had tried to secure work at a local hospital but to no avail. Carol entered Nova Scotia's first TIOW program in January 2008 and blossomed. With her new-found confidence and job search skills, Carol had no problem convincing hospital staff that she was worthy of a work placement and subsequent employment. Although hired as a casual, Carol was more than pleased with the amount of time she was able to work, sometimes more than if she was a full-time employee. Two and a half years later, Carol still had a smile on her face when asked if she was enjoying her work at the hospital. Hospital administration indicated that they consider Carol be a very valued member of their staff.*

Best Practice: The PeopleWorx coordinators worked proactively to identify potential opportunities for jobs and job placements, seizing every possible opportunity to engage with employers and stakeholders in the community to promote the benefits of hiring TIOW participants. By fostering new networking opportunities while cultivating strong relationships with employers who had benefited from the TIOW project in the past, PeopleWorx fostered many networking relationships which resulted in employer testimonials and bolstered awareness and support for the project and its participants among other employers. In addition, a key practice was having the participants take ownership in securing their own work placements and encouraging clients to actively promote work placements to employers with whom they wanted to work.

## Yukon: Yukon College TIOW Project



TIOW participants during a group session in the Yukon

The employment situation in Yukon is somewhat unique when compared to other regions in Canada. Yukon boasts a strong and stable economy with a relatively low unemployment rate that is consistently lower than the Canadian national average. The mining industry is growing and is complemented by an increase in construction, both in housing and commercial sectors. Steady employment in four levels of government has kept jobs secure over the years. However, despite population growth in the territory, labour force numbers are not increasing to match. As a result, employers are having difficulty finding workers and many employers

are reaching out to older workers who are retired, but may wish to return to the workforce.

Due to Yukon's remoteness and small population size, connections between business owners, politicians, professionals, trades people and government officials are well established. Yukon College is uniquely placed to deliver a TIOW project, as it is the territory's sole public post-secondary institution, with a central campus in Whitehorse and a network of 11 community campuses situated in Yukon communities with adult populations of greater than one hundred. Consequently, the College already has strong links with the public and private sectors and can allow for a more streamlined approach to connecting participants to available jobs. Accordingly, Yukon College was able to cultivate strong employer connections and raise awareness of the TIOW project.

As part of the in-course curriculum, employers and working professionals were regularly invited as guest speakers in order to give participants relevant, timely information on various employment opportunities throughout the territory. The project coordinator conducted skills assessments with each participant prior to enrolment to ensure they were suitable for the program.

The project coordinator worked through the College's established networks of employers to find four-week placements following the end of the group-based training. Participants were assigned a work placement, and the project coordinator kept in touch with the participants and employers throughout to ensure the needs



Participants taking part in a TIOW program in Yukon

of both were being met. This networking proved so successful in raising the profile of TIOW in the territory, there are currently enrolment waitlists for participants, and employers routinely contact the project coordinator directly to find out when TIOW graduates will be available for hire. It is also interesting to note that, based on a comprehensive survey of TIOW clients conducted in Yukon, at least 77% of TIOW clients were employed post-participation.

Best Practice: Yukon is able to serve a small, geographically-dispersed population of older workers by taking advantage of the College's well-established programs and cross-territorial networks. The project coordinator uses these networks to involve employers in the program by tapping them as guest speakers and hosts for potential work placements/future employment opportunities. This further raises the profile of TIOW and older workers for prospective employers across the territory.

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*“Made me believe in myself and gave me the confidence to go forward with my business ideas.”*

– Former TIOW Participant, Yukon

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## Alberta: TIOW Training/Skill Development for Mature Workers

Though Jasper is a small town with fewer than 5,000 residents, it has an international reputation for tourism given its location in Alberta's Rocky Mountains. The Jasper economy is largely tourism-based with a thriving winter outdoor recreation scene but the majority of its visitors come in the summer months. Despite being a popular vacation destination, Jasper suffers from a shortage of available labour to fill the many tourism and retail positions, particularly in the off-season months. The shortage continues to exist in the high season as there is high turnover, with many non-resident workers migrating into or out of the community.

Despite relatively low unemployment in the area overall (3.8% in March 2012), Jasper experiences challenges related to high employee turnover and labour shortages. Additionally, one of the area's largest employers, Parks Canada, recently underwent a significant downsizing. TIOW programming, thus, provided an ideal opportunity for unemployed older residents in the community to receive training for viable employment opportunities in the tourism and/or service sector.



TIOW participants working together in Alberta

As these types of jobs are typically marketed to younger and/or more migratory workers in the area, retention challenges have been an ongoing issue faced by local employers. The sector-specific curriculum of the TIOW project focused on increasing the capacity of participants to gain employment in tourism and/or retail fields and gain valuable work experience with local employers. As a result of the program and the work experience component it offers, employers in the area gained an increased awareness and appreciation of the valuable skills and experience offered by older workers. TIOW participants are now actively being sought out once they have completed training. Some participants have also gone on to launch their own local business ventures.

**Best Practice:** The TIOW project in Jasper prepared older workers to work in the thriving tourism and service sectors. Although many TIOW projects across the country effectively promote older workers as experienced and skilled workers with much to offer potential employers, the Jasper example stands out in terms of its emphasis on marketing the stability and dependability offered by older workers. This was particularly attractive to local employers given their specific recruitment and retention challenges.

## Quebec: “Projet O’Bouveau”

The Regional County Municipality of Antoine-Labelle is located in the Laurentides region of Quebec. According to the Quebec Department of Natural Resources and Wildlife, 83% of land in the Laurentides region is forest land (primarily in the north of the region), 74% of which is public. In this regard, the Antoine-Labelle RCM has a high proportion of jobs in the forestry sector, as well as wood product manufacturing sector, making it a significant piece of the MRC’s economy. The forestry sector in the area has seen a decline in recent years due to a substantial drop in demand for forestry products from the United States, which has affected many long-tenured older workers.

“O’Bouveau” was sponsored by Zone Emploi d’Antoine-Labelle, and was one of the first TIOW projects offered in the country. The 6-month program was designed to help unemployed older workers upgrade their skills and transition to employment in new secondary wood-product industries.



Participants in Quebec’s O’Bouveau project with some wood products completed during in-shop training

Recognizing both the particular skills and backgrounds of the participants, as well as the specific needs of employers in the area, a very unique aspect of this project was that the group-based learning component was actually located in a woodworking factory rather than in a traditional classroom setting in order to enable service providers to identify and develop transferable skills

and provide hands-on training. In addition, participants receive help with learning about employment skills such as job search, computer, and decision-making skills. There was also a heavy focus on coaching during

and after program participation. Many participants subsequently found employment with local employers.

**Best Practice:** The *O’Bouveau* project offered a unique opportunity for older workers from the forestry sector to exploit some of their current forestry-related knowledge and skills as they gained new skills needed to get jobs in the emerging wood-products industry. The practice of Zone-Emploi d’Antoine-Labelle to set its training largely in the woodworking factory was vital to the success of the project, as it exposed the participants directly to the types of tools, machines and operating processes they would need to work with in the new industry. Acquiring the new skills in a hands-on capacity also made TIOW participants more attractive to potential employers.

While assisting unemployed older workers become job-ready, this project helped local businesses in their efforts to expand the wood-products industry which, in turn, can help reduce the area's reliance on a single industry.

## **Building on Local Strengths**

In some communities, the labour market has very few current opportunities for immediate employment or is still undergoing transition or development. These communities are often small or geographically isolated, with fewer prospects for attracting traditional employers or sectors. Under such scenarios, many TIOW projects have proven to be successful in “building on local strengths” to develop new employment opportunities in the area (or to seize existing, yet not fully exploited job opportunities in the area). In these cases, the projects may work to prepare participants for employment or self-employment in burgeoning fields as those fields develop or transition.

The projects showcased in this section of the Compendium have all, in some manner, overcome challenges created by limited employment prospects in traditional industries such as resource development or manufacturing and tapped into local opportunities for growth in the tourism, cultural development, and/or traditional knowledge sectors.

For example, the project featured from the Northwest Territories aimed to re-establish the famed local cultural arts and crafts industry while teaching TIOW participants the skills needed to work independently. In the Nunavut example, a TIOW project capitalized on the opportunity to transform or re-orient a traditional cultural role into an employable one. Finally, as the Newfoundland and Labrador project showcased, the distinct cultural history of an area was leveraged into a successful, somewhat non-conventional venture centered on opportunities in the local tourism sector.

**Each of these examples is showcased on the following pages.**

## Northwest Territories: Ulukhaktok Handicraft Program

The community of Ulukhaktok (once known as Holman), home to 460 people, is nestled in picturesque Queen's Bay and surrounded by high bluffs on the western shore of Victoria Island – a landscape often represented in local art. In recent years, this community and the region as a whole has experienced difficulties in creating and/or maintaining sustainable long term employment opportunities due to challenges such as the decline in oil and gas activity, delays to the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, closure of mining operations on Victoria Island, and restrictions on big game hunting. The employment rate of the working age population in the community is 43% and the unemployment rate is 20%.

The community faces additional economic development challenges due to Ulukhaktok's remoteness, topography, and harsh winter conditions – which can limit economic development opportunities.

Ulukhaktok was once renowned for its “Holman Prints” and traditional craftworks created by the Holman Artists Association. However, for a number of reasons, the association had not produced any prints since 2000, and the number of crafts supplied to the market dropped during that same period as well. In 2008, the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation announced its plans to establish a new subsidiary in partnership with the Ulukhaktok Artists Association. The subsidiary was mandated to re-establish the craft centre and build on Ulukhaktok's longstanding arts and crafts tradition by producing and selling prints, crafts, carvings, qiviut (musk-ox wool) products, and soapstone carvings, ulus, and other items.



*TIOW Participants in Ulukhaktok, NT demonstrate their handicraft skills*

Based upon these unique considerations, the Inuvialuit Corporate Group designed its Ulukhaktok *Handicraft* project with a strong emphasis on self-employment objectives that prioritized local customs and traditions. Over a 12-week period, five older workers took part in this TIOW project, which trained participants to produce local handicrafts and to develop basic computer, photography, and marketing skills required for product promotion and sales. In addition, the project provided training in First-Aid/CPR certification, Northern Most Host certification, and small business/self-employment. All of this was in addition to enhancing employment readiness skills. Sessions on resume writing, job search techniques, and working in the North were also included in the curriculum to enhance employment readiness among program participants. Using their newfound skills, participants continue to produce local handicrafts and wholesale their products to the tourism industry.



Best Practice: For a community that has struggled to maintain sustainable long term employment, the project sponsor recognized the tremendous (yet often untapped) potential in self-employment opportunities for local older workers. This TIOW project went beyond helping participants gain the skills needed to become self-employed. For Ulukhaktok, TIOW provided an opportunity to revitalize a formerly prominent local arts and crafts industry.



## Nunavut: “Elders Training and Traditional Mentorship Program”

Cambridge Bay, NU on southeastern Victoria Island serves as a regional hub of activity: it is the largest stop for passenger and research vessels traversing the Northwest Passage; there are services and retail sectors supporting local companies; it is the location of several educational services ranging from primary care to a Nunavut Arctic College campus; and it plays an important role in the federal government’s Northern Strategy. It is quite noteworthy that, in 2010, the Prime Minister announced that Cambridge Bay would be the future site of the High Arctic Research Station.

Despite these opportunities, it is estimated that unemployment in the region is still higher than the national average, sitting at approximately 14% in 2011.<sup>5</sup> This is due in large part to layoffs in the mining industry—one of the region’s most significant employers. During the most recent recession, the mining industry was significantly impacted, leading to layoffs and stimulating higher competition for fewer jobs.



Past labour market and economic development efforts focused on training and hiring Inuit youth and young adults as opposed to older workers. Older workers in the area often lacked the skills required for new jobs, and some faced a language barrier. To address these challenges, the Kitikmeot Heritage Society, a local elder-directed organization focused on promoting the cultural history and traditional knowledge of Nunavut’s people, developed the *Elders* program. The program was designed to support local elders in developing or enhancing the skills needed to participate in the local heritage sector economy, and to restore local elders’ traditional role as teachers of cultural knowledge, skills, and languages for younger generations.

The project provided 8 Elders with a wide spectrum of job skills training and activities to prepare them for multiple employment options, particularly in the cultural and educational sectors. Participants took part in two months of classroom workshops, one-on-one job counselling sessions, introduction to basic digital technology, résumé development and job search techniques, followed up by practical work experience through a traditional skills mentorship program wherein participants were paired with local youth for a specific cultural

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<sup>5</sup> Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, 2013: StatsUpdate, accessed online November 6, 2013 at: [http://www.stats.gov.nu.ca/Publications/census/2011%20NHS/StatsUpdate\\_Employment-Education-Work%20Language\\_2011%20NHS.pdf](http://www.stats.gov.nu.ca/Publications/census/2011%20NHS/StatsUpdate_Employment-Education-Work%20Language_2011%20NHS.pdf)

or traditional skill project. The schedule for completing the project was within a two to three month period.

Upon completion of the project, Kitikmeot Heritage Society reported that all 8 TIOW participants were employed in the cultural and heritage sector.

Best Practice: Nunavut can be a challenging place for many traditional economic industries. Therefore, it was vital that the territory capitalized on the employment and economic development opportunities that were hidden -- yet nonetheless present -- in the area and that the TIOW project prepared participants appropriately to respond to these opportunities.

In this case, the Kitikmeot Heritage Society turned to the strengths of the older workers themselves—their link to their cultural traditions and their de facto position as elders. The Society identified a need for educators and cultural specialists to work with youth in the territory. It designed a project that not only reinforced the strong traditional role played by Elders in Inuit culture, but to turn that traditional type of role into an opportunity for paid labour market participation among older workers. This project resulted in benefits for TIOW participants, youth, and the broader community alike.



## Newfoundland & Labrador: “Creating Sustainable Communities Through Culture and History”

Located approximately two hours away from St. John’s, along the scenic “Irish Loop” passage on the Southern Avalon Peninsula, Trepassey is a popular destination for out-of-town travellers, particularly in the summer. Originally a thriving community established in the early 1600’s, in 1991 the local fish plant closed putting over 600 people out of work. Today the population of Trepassey numbers less than 600 (60% of which are estimated to be 55 years of age or older). The unemployment rate is estimated at 49%.



Participants in Newfoundland and Labrador’s WISE project at a group session

The Southern Avalon Development Association (SADA) developed a TIOW project in Trepassey to link into the province’s Strategic Economic Plan for the area, which identified tourism as a strategic development opportunity. In addition to Trepassey’s population, TIOW participants from even smaller neighbouring communities were encouraged to participate, subject to eligibility and project capacity.

Parlaying the popularity of the “Irish Loop” as a desirable tourist location, the project involved the setup and production of a dinner

theatre in Trepassey. Participants received 10 weeks of classroom training on *Super Host*, customer service, first aid, communication skills and theatre arts as well as employability skills training and vocational assessment. Following the classroom training, they engaged in a 12-week work experience which involved the actual production of the play, as well as skills such as taking reservations, greeting customers and serving the meal. The dinner theatre was a huge success and played to sold-out crowds.

On top of these day-to-day activities, participants learned other valuable skills and were actively engaged in marketing and fundraising efforts to raise the profile of current and future events. The first season had such a positive effect that the Trepassey Motel and Restaurant (where the meals for the theatre were produced and which traditionally closes every year in mid-October), remained open until December in order to accommodate the more than 950 patrons who visited the dinner theatre. As a result of the TIOW project, at least three of the participants have gone on to gain employment with different businesses in the area.

Though SADA experienced challenges in presenting the dinner theatre for the 2013 tourist season, plans are underway to hold it again in 2014 which will provide further employment for the community. As a result of TIOW successes in building the capacity of the community, the sponsor has partnered with other community organizations and is working to develop a UNESCO World Heritage Site application.

Best Practice: SADA has been successful in tapping into both the local heritage and Trepassey's location along a historically-significant route in order to strengthen its role in the regional tourism and hospitality strategy, thereby creating employment opportunities for unemployed older workers in the area.

The project created a fruitful opportunity for local economic development – bringing members of the community together to establish a successful dinner theatre operation which can run for multiple years and which the community can further expand upon. This project helped participants gain new skills, discover transferable skills they already possessed, become more confident, and become more employable. It also resulted in positive spin-off effects on other local businesses which can serve to increase potential employment prospects in the area.



## Conclusion

Each province and territory faces unique opportunities and challenges in their efforts to assist unemployed older workers living in small, vulnerable communities to reintegrate into employment and/or become more employable.

Whether it is a lack of employment opportunities or the emergence of new types of labour market prospects in particular jurisdictions, a mismatch between skill sets offered by available workers and those required by local employers, and/or distinct training needs of older worker populations in specific locales, the project examples featured in this compendium demonstrate that provinces and territories -- in various manners -- have all leveraged TIOW programming in innovative and concrete ways to help unemployed older workers prepare for and return to the labour market.

In this regard, the TIOW model itself is quite unique from many other labour market programs given its target clientele, group-based approach to learning, and F-P/T cost-shared funding model. Perhaps one of the most exciting and promising aspects of the program is the inherent flexibility it affords to all provinces and territories to customize and tailor their TIOW projects to best suit their local labour market needs and opportunities. This flexibility is vital to TIOW's success given that labour markets and older worker populations across the country are not all alike.

Indeed, a one-size-fits-all approach will rarely yield optimal results. Accordingly, this first edition of the "TIOW Best Practices Compendium" identifies a sampling of best practices and lessons learned in TIOW programming from every province and territory across the country. Recognizing that indications of success can vary in differing contexts, it is intended that these illustrative examples will individually and collectively facilitate constructive dialogue about "What Works in TIOW Programming – When, Where, and For Whom?"

Promising practices highlighted in this compendium signaled a number of lessons learned, including (but not limited to) the following: the importance of implementing dynamic recruitment and advertising strategies to ensure potential clients and employers alike are aware of the TIOW program and the benefits it yields; the value of facilitating strong partnerships and networking opportunities among and between TIOW project sponsors, clients, employers, and local organizations to identify specific labour market needs and opportunities; the merits of seizing viable opportunities for tailoring and/or customizing projects to best support participant and employer engagement; the advantages of embracing technology and social media platforms to facilitate communication and/or the acquisition of new skills; and the benefits of thinking creatively and innovatively at all stages of project planning/development/implementation in efforts to maximize the reach of programming with available resources.

Thanks to the cooperation and collaboration between ESDC and all provinces and territories on TIOW to-date, the initiative has reached thousands of unemployed older workers in small, vulnerable communities across Canada, from the vibrant centres of southern Ontario to the remote communities of the high Arctic.

Since it was first implemented in 2007, the TIOW program has prided itself on its ability to adapt and evolve gradually over time. Therefore, given the recent renewal of the initiative in Budget 2014 until March 31, 2017 and the broadening of its community eligibility criteria to include skills mismatches and unfulfilled employer demand, the next three years will present many new opportunities to think about how TIOW programming may continue to evolve to best serve the needs of unemployed older workers across the country and in order to be responsive to emerging opportunities presented by local labour market dynamics.

In many respects, taking stock of lessons learned in programming and leveraging multiple opportunities for engagement and information dissemination are best practices. Therefore, for TIOW, it is imperative for F-P/T partners to continually assess program results and gather insights to help inform forward-looking policy development. It is with this goal in mind that this first iteration of the TIOW Best Practices Compendium was prepared and will be updated over time.

## **ANNEX A**

### **TIOW Design and Delivery Models by Jurisdiction**

#### **Alberta**

In Alberta, six regions partner with local service providers to deliver TIOW, resulting in 18 projects across the province. Most of these same projects were subsequently extended. In most regions contracts were awarded based on Requests for Proposals (RFP). In some cases, TIOW services were added to the services provided by a sponsor already operating in the community. Some projects had multiple intakes, while others had continuous intake.

#### **British Columbia**

British Columbia undertook a Request for Proposal (RFP) process in each economic region to establish projects across the province. One year agreements were put in place which also included an option to renew in subsequent year(s). In 2012, successful service providers entered into two year agreements with the province.

#### **Manitoba**

Manitoba TIOW projects are regionally delivered through existing service providers across the province. Many of recent projects were extended for two years.

#### **New Brunswick**

Initially, New Brunswick used existing service providers to deliver TIOW projects but now selects projects through a Request for Proposal process. New Brunswick has TIOW projects operating in all seven regions of the province.

#### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Newfoundland and Labrador follows an RFP process annually and does not traditionally extend projects. In 2013-14, service providers were selected from the previous year's RFP. These were service providers who had ranked successfully but had not been chosen in the previous year due to budget constraints.

#### **Ontario**

Ontario operates its 37 projects through existing Employment Assistance Services. For the last two years, Ontario has extended its agreements.

#### **Northwest Territories**

In the Northwest Territories, TIOW is administered regionally through the Career Development offices which contracts with third party services providers to deliver the projects.

#### **Nova Scotia**

Nova Scotia follows the request for proposal (RFP) process when selecting projects. All proposals are examined and rated by a review committee, which includes representation from



Service Canada. Projects are selected based on the rating and funds available. Nova Scotia has extended projects when budget allows.

### **Nunavut**

The territory receives proposals from organizations interested in delivering the program in their area(s).

### **Prince Edward Island**

Given Prince Edward Island's small geographical size, the province acts as the project sponsor. Contracts are established with service providers at sites throughout the province to deliver TIOW programming. While TIOW in PEI followed one approved model, it is delivered at several different sites and includes multiple intakes.

### **Quebec**

In Quebec, project sponsors work with local employment centres to develop detailed project proposals. These proposals pass through review at the regional level and successful submissions are then recommended for approval to the central office. TIOW projects are often extended and most are active for several years. However, each year some new projects are added while others wind down for various reasons.

### **Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan follows the Request for Proposal process for the selection of service providers to deliver the TIOW projects. Contract agreements with service providers have been up to two years in duration. Contracts with service providers are monitored as per the provincial standards and a TIOW Service Provider Handbook has been developed to assist the contractors with project delivery.

### **Yukon**

Given Yukon's geographic challenges and limited educational and training organizations, the best service provider in the territory to deliver a TIOW project is Yukon College. While Yukon had project intakes operating throughout the territory (satellite campuses and the main campus in Whitehorse), most recent intakes have been at the Whitehorse campus only with one intake in the fall and one in the winter.

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Training and Employment Services  
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<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/publications/12795.html>

**British Columbia:**

Labour Market Programs Branch  
Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills  
Training  
Telephone: (250)387-7478  
<http://www.gov.bc.ca/jtst/>

**Manitoba:**

Training and Employment  
Services  
Department of Jobs and the  
Economy  
Telephone: (204)785-5156  
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/>

**New Brunswick:**

Post-Secondary Education Training  
and Labour  
Telephone: (506)453-2056  
[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary\\_education\\_training\\_and\\_labour.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary_education_training_and_labour.html)

**Newfoundland and Labrador:**

Department of Advanced Education  
& Skills  
Telephone: (709)729-3232  
<http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/findajob/tiow.html>

**Northwest Territories:**

Advanced Education Division  
Education, Culture and  
Employment  
Telephone: (867)920-3391  
<http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/>

**Nova Scotia:**

Labour and Advanced Education  
Telephone: (902)722-5028  
<http://www.novascotia.ca/employmentnovascotia/tiow/>

**Nunavut:**

Department of Family Services  
Telephone: (867)975 5675  
<http://www.edu.gov.nu.ca/apps/authoring/dspPage.aspx?page=home>

**Ontario:**

Strategic Policy and Programs  
Division  
Ministry of Training, Colleges  
and  
Universities  
Telephone: (416)327-6584  
<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/tiow.html>

**Ontario:**

Employment and Training Division  
Ministry of Training, Colleges and  
Universities  
Telephone: (416)327-2330  
<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/tiow.html>

**Prince Edward Island:**

SkillsPEI  
Telephone (902)368-4178  
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/ial/>

**Québec:**

Responsable de l'ICTA pour  
la région du Québec  
Ministère de l'emploi et de la  
solidarité sociale  
Téléphone : (514)864-3995  
[http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/Index\\_en.asp](http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/Index_en.asp)

**Saskatchewan:**

Apprenticeship and Workforce Skills  
Branch, Ministry of the Economy  
Telephone: (306)787-2613  
<http://economy.gov.sk.ca/tiow>

**Yukon:**

Yukon Education  
Yukon Government  
Telephone: (867)667-5051  
[http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/continued/older\\_workers\\_program.html](http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/continued/older_workers_program.html)

# Notes

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